

No 11

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED

At the PARISH-CHURCH of the
H O L Y T R I N I T Y,

In the Town of *Bungay* in *Suffolk*;

And in that

Of *North-Repps* in the County of *Norfolk*,

October 13 and 20. 1745.

On Occasion of the present

R E B E L L I O N.

By THOMAS WILSON, A. M.

K

Minister of the said Parishes, and late Fellow
of *Baliol* College in OXFORD.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN and JAMES RIVINGTON,
at the *Bible and Crown* in *St Paul's Church Yard*;
and sold by J. GLEED and — J. CARLOS in
Norwich. 1745.

CHARITABLE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE



OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

TO THE
INHABITANTS

Of the respective Parishes of

NORTH-REPPS,

In the County of *Norfolk;*

AND OF THE

HOLY TRINITY,

IN THE

Town of *Bungay* in *Suffolk;*

This plain Discourse is with all due
Respect and Humility inscribed,

*By their affectionate Friend
and Pastor,*

T. W.

TO THE

INHABITANTS

Of the Township of

WORTHINGTON

IN THE COUNTY OF

AND OF THE

OLYMPIA

OF THE

Town of



By the

Mayor

T. W.

PROV. XXIV. 21.

My Son, fear thou the Lord, and the King, and meddle not with them, that are given to change.

THESE are the Words of a great King and a wise Man; and plain as they are, they contain very useful and pious Directions, founded upon a deep Sense and large Experience of things; and ought to be safely deposited in every loyal and religious Breast, as sacred, uncontroverted Rules of Conduct, to be drawn out for Use, when any unhappy Conjunction of Events may more particularly call for them.

This is our Case at present. There is an unnatural Rebellion broke out in the Northern Parts of this Island, headed by the Son of a Person who pretends a Right to the Crown of these Realms; and which, there is no doubt, will be supported by some great foreign Powers, in order to overturn the Settlement in the present Royal Family. The Consequences of

B

which

which Rebellion (should God Almighty for the Punishment of our Sins permit it to prosper,) are so dreadful ; that although I cannot mention them without Horror, yet my Duty to God, my King, and my Country ; nay, my Duty towards you, as your particular Pastor and Instructor, will not suffer me to pass them over in Silence.

But the Meaning and Connection of the several Parts of the Text being first explained, these things will occur by way of Application.

First. *My Son, saith Solomon, fear the Lord.* This Expression, *fear the Lord*, or *the Fear of the Lord*, is used with some Latitude in Scripture. Sometimes it denotes the Sum and Substance of Religion, *Deut. x. 12.* In another Place it is taken more strictly, and signifies that Part of it, which immediately respects the Divine Being, and is distinguished by the Name of the Worship of God, *Deut. vi. 13.* compared with *Matt. iv. 10.* Lastly ; in the strictest Sense of all, it denotes an awful Reverence and Apprehension of God upon the Mind ; as an omnipotent, just, and pure Being. And as this Principle is grafted upon the strongest Passion of our Nature, it operates universally ; to reclaim those, that are bad, and to quicken those, who are well disposed, to begin, and persevere in, a Course of Religion. And accordingly it is said by this Divine Writer, *Prov. i. 7.* to be the Beginning of Knowledge. Knowledge, Wisdom

dom and Religion, being in these Proverbial Scriptures, Words of nearly the same Meaning.

Either of these Senses will well support the wise Man's Command to his Son ; and each is Matter of Duty and Obligation ; but the most proper, I think, is *that* which includes the whole of Religion ; all it's Reasons, and all it's Motives, which Solomon inculcates upon him, as the first and most important thing, it being really so in itself, and the true Root and Foundation of every particular Virtue.

By Religion, I mean *pure and undefiled Religion* ; not that Form or outward Profession of it, which Superstition at any times teaches and enjoins : I mean true Virtue and solid Piety, founded upon a firm Belief of the Being, Providence, and moral Perfections of God ; and of our absolute Dependance upon him, for all we enjoy and all we hope ; all that can make us happy either in this World or the next.

A full Persuasion of these important Truths, leads directly to that Head-Principle, *the Love of God* ; from this every inferior Duty flows, and into it may be ultimately resolved. He that *loveth God* will *love his Brother*, which is the second great Source of Virtue ; because this is doing nothing more than obeying the Will of this great Father and Friend of Mankind, which is the only genuine Mark of our loving him.

him. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments*; 1 John v. 3.

Now he that *loveth God*, must in the Nature of the thing *fear him*; I don't mean that wretched State of Mind, which is the common Associate of Guilt; but I mean a filial Fear, a Fear, not unlike that of a Son, who loves his Father; a Fear of disobliging him; which, superadded to those eternal Reasons, upon which our Love of this greatest and best of Beings is founded, will form the strongest Bond of Obedience, and keep us uniform and unshaken in the Pursuit of our Duty, if any thing in Nature can do it.

The Connection of these things was well understood by this Royal Preacher; and accordingly he wisely premises this great Principle of *fearing God*, as the surest Foundation of that other most reasonable Command, *fearing the King*; that is, reverencing his Person, and submitting to his Laws, and making him all possible Returns of Love and Honour, as a poor Recompense for that Weight of Cares and Vexations, which the Nature of civil Government unavoidably lays upon his shoulders.

And, in Truth, *fearing the King*, in this Sense, is the genuine Effect of *fearing God*, by whose Appointment Kings reign, and whom he has proclaimed his Substitutes and Vice-gerents to rule under him, in the Kingdoms and Nations
of

of Men. And St Paul declares, *that whosoever resisteth the higher powers, resisteth the ordinance of God*, Rom. xiii. 2.

With what Limitation this Rule ought to be understood, as applied to ourselves, it may be convenient to mention afterwards. At present I observe only in general, that the truest and firmest Allegiance to Princes is grafted upon Religion, or *the Fear of God*; because this is an universal Rule, which operates at all times, and reaches every Breast, in which there are any Remains of Conscience; and if Persons under false Pretences dare to violate it, they must one Day answer it at their Peril.— Answer it! Where? Or to whom? — To the great *King of Kings*, and at the *Judgment-Seat of Christ*.

This must be an Argument of mighty Force; I will not say with all who call themselves Christians, but with all, I am sure, who are really so; and it receives an additional Weight from this very Circumstance, over and above that which the Authority of Solomon could give it: For although he was inspired by God, and could not therefore be disregarded by those, who received him under that Character, without violating Conscience; yet the Doctrine of a future State, the Eternity and Importance of it, was not in that Period so clearly brought to Light, as it was afterwards in the Gospel: And this gives, I say, a great additional Weight to
the

the Argument of Duty and Allegiance to Princes; such a Weight, as needs nothing more than to be laid upon the Mind; it will sink of itself, and that into the very Centre of your Hearts.

Next to the Command of *fearing God*, the wise Author adds, *and meddle not with them, that are given to change*; as a true Comment, upon the Text of Allegiance to Princes; as a thing, if not duely considered, that might lead his Son to a Violation of it.

It may be collected from this Passage; from the Histories of Nations in general; from few perhaps more, than the Histories of our own, and from sad Experience of the present Juncture; that in all large Bodies or Societies of Men, there are always Persons of restless, discontented, and mischievous Minds; who are never pleased with any Administration of Power, however good or well designed; and that more especially, when any Rubs and Disappointments happen, as in the Course of human things will always be the Case.

And if these troublesome and dissatisfied Spirits (as it generally falls out,) live without the Awe and Influence of religious Principles; above all, that Principle, which requires Obedience and Fidelity to Rulers; they are immediately hatching Schemes of Rebellion in their Brains; or if too dull themselves to do it,

it, are gaping and upon the catch for any seditious Suggestions, which the more ingenious Sons of Confusion may throw in their Way : And should Opportunity offer, which promises the least Prospect of Security or Success, they are ready, at the first Summons from the Trumpet of Rebellion, to involve themselves and their Fellow-Subjects in Plunder and Blood ; often to the very Ruin and Excision of that State, whose Defects and Male-administration (as the Cry is) they at first only pretended to redress. *Solomon* therefore, like a wise and experienced King, cautions his Son against Leaders and Seducers of this sort : *Meddle not with them* ; shun them, as you would Persons infected with the Plague ; — Their very Breath will taint you ; *the poison of asps is under their lips* : Their Example and Conversation may by Degrees give you too favourable an Opinion of them and their Designs ; which if it does not ensnare you into the same Rebellion, may possibly so disarm your Abhorrence of it, as not to give it the Opposition in your Power, and which it is your Duty to do. It is prudent to guard against the smallest and remotest Causes of rebellious Sentiments.

And this illustrates the Wisdom of that Advice, which is immediately connected with the Commands of *fearing God, and the King.* — *My Son, meddle not with them, who are given to change.*

Which

Which Advice I shall particularly apply to the present State and Circumstances of this Nation.

You will recollect, that in the beginning of my Discourse, I mentioned a most *unnatural* Rebellion broke out in the North; (not to inform you of a Fact, which is notorious to all, but to remind you of what Behaviour is becoming upon this Critical Occasion;) a Rebellion, which may possibly rise to a higher Pitch, than some may be prone to believe, from the Success it has lately met with; and from a Confidence of being supported by some great foreign Powers. I call it an *unnatural* Rebellion, because the present Royal Person, sitting upon the Throne, and swaying the Sceptre of these Realms, has never made, (nor has it been so much as pretended he ever made,) the least Attempt upon the Liberties of his Subjects, Civil or Religious; but has left the Laws open to their free Course; so that every Man enjoys his Property, and his particular Way of worshipping God, according to his Conscience, (as he has a natural Right to do,) without Injury or Molestation.

For the Truth of this Assertion I appeal to the Conscience of every Person that hears me.

How long you will enjoy these invaluable Blessings, in case the present audacious Attempt should continue to go on, and at last prove prosperous,

perous, is no difficult Matter to guess. There is the greatest Reason to fear, that you will, if not immediately, yet in a little time lose them all; and, which is dreadful to think, the Way to the Loss of them, must be through a Sea of Blood and Rapine. Not Blood and Rapine between Nation and Nation, who are unfortunately engaged in War with each other; (and who having no particular Ties of Nature, Friendship, and civil Intercourse, may feel a Kind of savage Joy in their mutual Miseries and Distresses, which will seem to lessen them) but Blood and Rapine among Members of the same Body Politick: — A War in our own Bowels; — a Civil War: Which of all earthly Evils is most big with Misery. Words are too feeble to express, or Imagination to conceive, it's Horrors.

I have no Reason, indeed, to suspect that there are any among you, so ignorant of your Duty to God, and your King; so blind to your own Interest; so insensible of the Advantages you enjoy under the present Establishment; as that by any Means you will be drawn aside to favour this daring Attempt to overturn it: Yet, as it is possible, that some of you may have lighter Notions of this Matter, and of the Consequences, that must naturally flow from a Revolution, in Favour of that Person, who pretends a Right to the Crown of these Realms; I will go into a Detail of Particulars, that you

may see, I do not talk at random, in a loose declamatory Way; but that I proceed upon solid Grounds and Reasons, such as must fully convince you of the Danger that now threatens us; and which, notwithstanding the most favourable Appearances to the contrary, may possibly end in something worse than threatening, unless the Mercy of God interpose in our Behalf; which it is the Duty of us all to pray for.

And first: The Pretender to this Crown, (in whose Cause the present rebellious Attempt is made,) has from his Infancy been bred up in all the superstitious and corrupt Doctrines of the Romish Church; and resided for many Years in the prime Seat of Papacy; where these Doctrines are inculcated with the greatest Zeal and Rigour. Were these Doctrines indeed of a mere speculative Nature, and extended their Influence no farther than his own Breast, he was a Person to be pitied, rather than feared. But they are Doctrines, many of them, I mean, so utterly subversive of all true Religion, and so highly injurious to Civil Liberty; as is notorious to all, even to those, who are but meanly versed in them, that it is impossible these things should stand together; and where-soever these Doctrines have obtained a legal Establishment, they have constantly produced arbitrary Government, as they pave the
Way

Way directly to it. And is it not Madness then to think, we could be safe in our Civil and Religious Rights with such a Prince at the Helm? He will promise, perhaps, upon a Prospect of Success, that he only desires Liberty of Conscience for himself and Family, and to worship God in his own Way; and that the People shall enjoy their present Laws and Religion, in as ample and free Manner, as they are used, and have a Right from the Nature of their Constitution, to do.

—This is but common Policy!

But beware of Artifices of this Kind; they are popular indeed, but fine drawn, like the Spider's Web: And can entrap none, but those, who are either very weak, or else have a good Inclination to be deceived.

Remember King *James* (his reputed Father) made the same Promise; and that too, in the most solemn Manner at the Holy Altar, the Day the Crown was set upon his Head; nay, renewed this Promise afterwards from time to time in the most publick Manner; and yet how well he performed that Promise, many now alive can witness: That is, he broke it in a most shameless Manner; immediately set at work all his Tools of Power, to destroy this excellent Constitution of ours, both in Church and State. Nor could the Hazard of his Crown, nor the Interest

terest of his Family, outweigh those Prejudices, nor over-rule those Measures; which his adulterate Religion, and Popish Counsellors, had infused into him.

The sad Catastrophe of which to himself and Family, and the wonderful Interposition of Providence at that time in behalf of this Nation, you all well know.

Should any Body be prone to argue, that an Oath in it's Nature is a strong Band, and the most solemn Tie; and though broke through by the Father, may nevertheless hold the Son; who cannot be ignorant of the Rock, upon which he split: It may be proper to remind you, that the Prejudices of Education are frequently of Weight enough, to bear down every other Consideration; that it is moreover the avowed Principle of the Church he belongs to, that no Faith is to be kept with Hereticks; that is, with any Christians of another Communion: And farther, that the Pope can give a Dispensation from the Obligation of an Oath, (and you may be sure, would not deny such an Indulgence to one, to whom he has given Bread) for the sake of serving what they ridiculously call the Catholick Church.

An Oath therefore in this Case, and under these Circumstances is a Tie, not to be depended

pended upon. — And what Influence the Power and Example of a King (who has so much to bestow) must in a little time have upon a People, is too obvious to insist upon.

And as our religious Rights would by these means be brought into the utmost Peril; or rather, must in the natural Tendency of Things be soon swallowed up. So our Civil Properties likewise, and our Interest as a Nation, must be exposed to the same Fate, and are embarked in the same Bottom.

For should this impious Invasion by the avenging Providence of God be suffered to succeed, I ask, who are it's Instruments? You will answer, perhaps our own People. God forbid we should be so far infatuated, as to be undone by ourselves. For although many have plunged their audacious Hands in this black Enterprize; yet they are chiefly the Scum of the Land; and I am willing to hope, (and from the general loyal Bent of the Nation have good Ground to hope) that the Number will never rise to such a Pitch, as to endanger the present Settlement. — The Noble, the Rich, the Wise, the Considerate of all Ranks, who are truly Protestants, will, I trust, unite as in one common Cause, on which their All depends; and bury in Oblivion every Party-Prejudice and Distinction, which keep us at a Distance, and weaken our Strength. Such

Such an Union must damp the Courage, and defeat the Projects of the most sanguine among our Enemies, and will effectually keep within Bounds the giddy Multitude, who are ever prone to change, because they know neither the Sin, nor Misery attending it.

Whence then arise our present Fears and Apprehensions? I said we are not so foolish, I trust, as to ruin our selves: But there are other Causes of Fear; and the great Sins and Abominations of a People that live amidst the pure Light of the Gospel not the smallest of them.

It was suspected at first, and is now past all doubt, that the two great Powers of *France* and *Spain*, were at the Bottom of this desperate Invasion; (and it was but natural to fear it, for Reasons too obvious to mention) and how far God may use them, as Scourges of his Providence over us, it is impossible to say.

Thus much is certain, they are our old Enemies, and want no Inclination to distress us; nay they are Foes to Liberty in general, and bear an implacable Hatred to this Nation, as one of it's greatest Bulwarks.

It is known to all, who are acquainted with the Policy of *France*, that it has been

watching every Opportunity, for these last hundred Years, as it's favourite fixt Point, to enslave all the neighbouring States; and could they once put a Yoke upon our Necks, it would be a great Step towards accomplishing their Design.

With what View do you imagine, they kindled the present War in *Germany*? To be true to their Allies! No: It was black Treachery to the House of *Austria*, which the Faith of the Nation was pre-engaged to defend: It was to carry on the Scheme of unbounded Ambition, upon the Ruins of that illustrious House. And should they by any means be able to effect it, (as we trust through a merciful Providence they will not) they would then give Law as they please, to the rest of the nearer States; there being no Power at Hand, of Weight enough to balance and over-rule their iniquitous Projects.

Thus all *Europe* might be affected; and the nearer Parts of it must in a little time be subject to the Will and Humour of this perfidious Kingdom.

A King then advanced to the Throne of these Realms, by Means of our most inveterate Enemies: To one of whom he is allied by Blood in a remoter Degree, to both by a
cruel

cruel and bigotted Religion; and to whom he and his Family owe many personal Obligations, will, without doubt, both from Inclination and Gratitude, steer all his Councils to the utmost of his Power by the Rudder of those States, to whom he owes his Crown; and this must soon make us dependent upon them, more particularly upon *France*, who is our nearest and most formidable Enemy; and instead of being, and having been for many Ages, a free, great, and glorious People, renowned for Arms and Commerce through the whole World, and yielding Protection to other States, whom this unjust Power has many times attempted to enslave, we shall become no more than a Province to it; have no more Trade and Navigation, than they shall be pleased to chalk out to us; which must soon end in the universal Beggary and Ruin of this great and flourishing Nation.

These things and these Consequences are well understood by all thoughtful Persons among us. And when our All is at Stake: When our Rights and our Liberties, Civil and Religious, depend upon the Success or Confusion of this daring Invasion; how ought we to oppose it by all prudent Ways and Means in our Power, from a Principle of Interest to ourselves, as well as from a Sense of those Oaths and Obligations, by which many of us have bound ourselves to our present lawful

lawful Sovereign. And who has in Justice a Right to our firmest Fidelity and Allegiance, as he has never broke in, nor even been suspected of a Design to break in, upon those important Conditions, upon which that Fidelity and Allegiance were promised.

For as the Monarchy of these Realms is of a limited Kind, the Measures of our Obedience are so too : And whilst the King keeps within the Bounds of his legal Prerogative, and makes no Attack upon the Fundamentals of our Constitution, to resist him is rank Rebellion ; it is resisting the Ordinance of God : And the Scripture pronounces, that they, who *thus resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.* Rom. xiii. 2.

This is a Limitation proper to be understood ; when we apply the Apostle's general Command of *Subjection to the higher Powers* ; to such a Form and Constitution of Government, as ours is, as hinted in the Beginning of my Discourse : And this is a Point which I would have you seriously consider.

I have no Reason, I said, to suspect, (and it would be Matter of concern to me, should it happen in one single Instance,) that any among you, who have a tolerable Knowledge of things, will, under any Pretence whatever, be tempted to withdraw your Allegiance from your present lawful Sovereign ; yet should this impious Rebellion by any Means continue to gain
D Ground ;

Ground; or though quelled at present, should, like Fire, concealed in Ashes, be blown up into a second Flame; spread far and wide; and reach the very Corners of the Land; (which God only can foresee) the Dubiousness of the Event may possibly shake your Resolutions of Loyalty, unless they are founded upon the solid Basis of Religion and Conscience.

I am sensible, that in all large and mixt Communities of Men, there are some thoughtless, others tumultuous; some of no Fortunes at all, others of ruined or perplexed ones; and these having little as they apprehend at stake, are apt to flatter themselves, with the Prospect of some Advantages, in times of general Confusion; what have we to hazard, they may say, but our Lives? And those not over easy and comfortable: What! Have you no Souls? You have, whether you think of them or not, or consider their Worth: And these you will forfeit to God by your Rebellion, if there be Truth in the Scriptures.— Or suppose such Persons not tempted to take up Arms against their *lawful Sovereign*; perhaps, they will not exert the Means in their Power of defending him and their Country, in Case of Extremity, which is a lower Species of this Crime.

It is proper, that Persons of no Education, and who cannot see far into Consequences, should have these things fairly laid before them. Liberty is the same to the Poor, as to the Rich

Rich or Great, and is enjoyed by all in this Nation, without Distinction of Persons in the present State of Things. But should Rebellion once throw us into Confusion, and the Rebellion that now threatens prove victorious; (which God in his Mercy prevent) it must be followed with such Circumstances, as must in the natural Tendency of things enslave us. And in that Case let not the meanest Artizan, or Daily-Labourer, flatter himself, (as he is prone to do) that he shall fare as well as at present.

The Miseries of an enslaved State always fall heaviest upon the lowest Ranks of Mankind, and it is known to all who are acquainted with the Condition of those, who live under absolute Governments; what Indignities and Oppressions they undergo, what Violences are offered to Human Nature, and how impossible it is for them to resist or redress them.

Their Children shall be torn from their Embraces, or themselves from theirs, to serve the Humour or Ambition of an arbitrary Prince: which sure would set particularly heavy upon the Spirits of a People, who have tasted, do I say! I mean, who have drank deep of the Sweets of Liberty.

It is indeed with this, as with other invaluable Blessings; — with Health; — with Peace; — with the Light, Warmth, and genial

nial Virtue of the Sun ; — they are common, and when enjoyed without Interruption, not duely attended to : But the Want of them, but a little while, speaks their Worth and Importance.

Let us all then, not in Word only, *but with singleness of heart, as unto the Lord, and not unto men*, exprefs our Detestation of that daring Rebellion, which is kindled in the Land, and should it continue to increase and gather Strength, whether from the open or secret Assistance of any foreign Power, which may render it more and more formidable ; let us manifest our Fidelity to our King and Country, by all Ways and Means in our Power, in proportion to our Ranks and Circumstances in the World.

The Rich should be aiding with their Purfes ; the Wise with their Counfel ; the Brave with their Lives, in Case of Necessity ; and all with their devout Breathings to God, that he would be still favourable to this Land ; and although he has chastized it in Part, yet that he would be graciously pleased to stop short his Hand, and not make *us all drink of the cup of his fury* ; — *The dregs of the cup of trembling*, Isa. li. 17.

But will our Prayers and Supplications alone avail ? No : These of themselves are too cheap a Sacrifice, and will be rejected by God, unless accompanied *with a troubled spirit, a broken and contrite heart*. — And we have few, too
few

few Oblations, I am afraid, of this Kind to offer him.

Whether the Nation is so far over-run with Vice and Prophaneness, as many pious Persons are prone to fear, may possibly be a doubt: But there can be no Dispute at all, that it has gone great Lengths in both; and what will be the end thereof, without a speedy Amendment, the great Disposer of all things only can tell.

I know but one Way for us to judge, how any Nation stands with Respect to the Favour of God; and that is, by computing as near as may be the various Degrees of it's Merit and Demerit. — If, upon a Review of the several Ranks of Mankind, the Account turns out favourable; there is Room to hope, that God is on it's Side. If the contrary! If, notwithstanding the Fidelity of a few, the Nation in general be deeply polluted. If, besides a visible Decay of Virtue and Piety, private and publick, it gives up or maliciously disputes the very Principles of both, which so far cuts off all Hope of Repentance; such a People, to be sure, are in a fair Way of filling up the Measure of their Iniquity. And when that is done, God descends upon them *in his fury like fire, and it burneth, that none can quench it.*

Such was frequently the Behaviour of God's chosen People, the Jews; such the Conduct of his Providence towards them: And by the same equal Rule he deals with every other Nation under Heaven.

This

○ This seems to be the true State of the Case.

It amounts to nothing to say, that God governed that People after a particular Model; that he inspired Messengers from Time to Time to declare to them his Will in the most publick Manner; and tell them beforehand, what they must expect, if they did not repent and return, and leave Room for Mercy.

There was, to be sure, somewhat very awakening in these Notices; but will you infer therefore, that God is under a Necessity of giving them to other Nations, who live under the Government of his ordinary Providence. Cannot God rule the World with Silence and Secresy, as well as in an open and familiar Way? And shall we dare to dispute his Providence, because we trace with Difficulty the Method of it's Proceeding?

Whatever Perplexities attend particular Events; (and seeming ones there must be to us, who see so few links of the great Chain) God is, ever was, and will be, the King of all the Earth; and as Nations are Beings of a temporal Kind, and will absolutely cease, when the *Fashion of this World passes away*, they must be judged here or not at all: And when ever God proceeds to Judgment, corrects and punishes them; it is always with a View, that they *may learn Righteousness*; that they may see, and be afraid of that political Justice, which the great Ruler of the World for ever
exer-

exercifes, and which is, in Truth, effential to a Being, who holds in his Hand the mighty Balance, in which the Fates of Kingdoms are weighed.

The Use and Application of this important Truth is left to our own Reasonings; and I wifh, we may duly confider it.

But alas! It is with Nations, as with particular Persons; *Because fentence againft an evil work is not executed fpeedily; therefore the heart of the fons of men is fully fet in them to do evil*, Eccl. viii. 11.

What Abuse of Mercy is this? What falfe Reasoning?—*fooner or later*, though different things with Regard to men, are the fame to an infinite Being, with whom *one day is as a thoufand years, and a thoufand years, as one day*, 2 Pet. iii. 8.

Beloved, deceive not yourfelves. *The Lord is not slack*,—(as fome Men count Slacknefs,) *but is long-fuffering to us-ward, not willing, that any fhould perifh, but that all fhould come to repentance*, ver. 9.

You fee here the Patience of God; great it is, and well for us, that it is fo, for we have tried it fufficiently: But great as it is, it has it's Period: And what aftonifhing Blindnefs muft it then be, not to take Warning from his milder Chaf tifements, but to go on, daring and desperate, till our Eyes are opened by fome prodigious Ruin.

We

○ We read, 'tis true, that God would have spared the impure City, could he have found but *ten righteous Persons* in it : — What proportion that Number bore to the whole, we cannot say ; but this certainly is a wonderful Example of Divine Tenderness, and yields us some Ground of Comfort ; for fallen as we are, we are yet, I trust, within this Rule of Mercy.

It would be terrible indeed, if in so large a Community, as this Nation is, there were not many serious and good Christians ; many in fact, though few, I fear, in Proportion : And for the sake of these, (who are always the peculiar Care of Heaven) God may spare the rest. Nay, I trust, there are some, now present, and it must be no mean Consolation to reflect, that should it please the Almighty to proceed farther in his Judgments, we ourselves have no Hand in pulling them down.

The Mercy of God, abused as it has been, has yet left in our Hands the Means of our Deliverance. We have Ships, Men, Money, and Courage ; and I hope Honesty to defend so glorious a Work, even to the last Extremity. But then let it be remembered, that these are but second Causes, and that their Success depends upon the good Will of Heaven ; — Here let us rest ! — Here fix our Standard ! — *For though the horse is prepared against the day of battle, yet safety is of the Lord, Prov. xxi. 31. He delivereth, and rescueth, he maketh war to cease, and restraineth the wrath of man.*

F I N I S.

